

'orotundity' of Voltaire!)—to such a parade of paradoxes one may ask whether much value, 'tonic' or other, is really added by their 'dogmatism'. For if one may hazard a generalisation about these revolutionary generalisations, it is that they are without exception false. When the leaders of a movement allow themselves such orgies of certainty, it may be imagined what happens with the camp-followers.

But, after all, that some modern critics should stultify themselves by being so doctrinaire, need not matter much to any one but themselves. The real harm lies, I think, in the effect of too much criticism on the creative writers and, much more, on the public of today.

No doubt every creative writer must be in some degree a critic, too; every revision of a man's own work entails self-criticism. But there may come a point where the critic in him rises up and strangles the creator—cramps his style, paralyses his daring, gives him a mental stammer. The more sophisticated the age he lives in, the greater the danger. To quote Flaubert once more: 'Ce qui nous manque, c'est l'audace. A force de scrupules, nous ressemblons a ces pauvres- devots qui ne vivent pas de peur de l'enfer, et qui reveillent leur confesseur de grand matin pour s'accuser d'avoir eu la nuit des reves amoureux.' There are hundreds of authors at work today who would never fall into the lapses of taste

that mar page
after page of Shakespeare; the technical
slovenlinesses of
Wordsworth would shock a modern writer
of magazine
verse. But we remain even more incapable
of their great-
ness than of their faults. One does not
travel far, if one
takes one's own temperature at every step.
'Par Fanalyse,'
writes Amiel, je me suis annule.' One of the
fundamental
conditions of good writing is, I believe, the
right balance
of conscious and unconscious in the
writer's mind. In